



Guidelines to write a BookBox story

1. Storyline or plot: The stories need some tension that has to be resolved at the end. As without a conflict, there is no story.
2. Resolution of problems: All the problems need to detangle by the end of the story. No loose end should be left unattended.
3. The relationship between characters: The relationship between each character needs to be well defined.
4. Effects on a child's self-image: The author needs to keep in mind what the story is doing to the child's self-image. A story should inspire the child towards becoming a better person.
5. The author's perspective: The author's viewpoint should be clear right from the start and should remain the same through out the story.
6. Character development: The characters need to have personality traits that bring them to life. At least choose one typical quality of the protagonists and mould the proceedings in the story that support this characteristic. This makes the characters more real and children find it easy to relate to them.
7. Any biased words: The author needs to be conscious of the words that he/she is using. The story in no way should be condescending to any race or culture. E.g. a chinky eyed Chinese girl stood before Boo.
8. Attention span: The author needs to keep in mind the short attention span of a child and make sure that the number of words does not exceed 400 words.
9. Humor, suspense and mystery: The use of humor, suspense and mystery is a great way to keep children hooked to the story until the end.
10. Cultural framework and Universal appeal: Children from around the world should be able to relate to the story and its characters.
11. Sufficient action: A story needs to offer enough action to hold a child's attention until the end.
12. Deaths or cruelties: As children are susceptible to any kind of violence, no death or any sort of cruelty should be included in the story.
13. Male and female: The writer must find a balance between the male and female elements. There should be no tilt towards a single sex. Not every story should have a male protagonist or vise versa.
14. Preaching: The story should not be used as a platform to dole out moral teachings to children (at least not in an obvious way, e.g. the moral of the story is...)
15. No comment or observation: Avoid directing any comments at the reader. It can be accepted in special cases.
16. Plot and characters: should remain in the foreground at all times (theme always at the back).
17. Dialogues: A balance should be maintained between the use of dialogues and a third person narration. A good equilibrium will make the story more active and fun to read. The writer must keep in mind that the stories will eventually be animated. The text must reflect this and at the same time, it should be good enough to stand as a read-alone story/text.



18. The age group: The BookBox stories are meant for children below 10 years of age. The plot, language and theme should be chosen accordingly. To facilitate your dilemma to determine the age group, we suggest that you run an online test for your story on the link provided below.

http://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp

19. Straightforward language: Vivid use of language makes the reading more enjoyable. At such a young age, children are incapable of appreciating language that is experimental or turns of phrases that bring newness. The writer should use simple idiomatic English, as this will also benefit the child linguistically. However, the writer should not cease to think of new ways of expression as this makes the story more interesting.

20. Active sentences: Active sentences are clearer, more direct, and more concise. Restrain from using the passive as much as possible as the stories are meant for kids.

21. Short sentences: Children find it difficult to follow the thought process in a long sentence. The author needs to cut his/her thoughts and present them in to the point, crisp sentences.

22. Easy words: The moment a child is unable to understand the meaning of a word he/she is tempted to stop reading or in our case stop watching the story. This is the reason why we encourage the author to use the simplest of words. We will soon offer a word bank that will show the words that can be used for different age groups.

23. Consistent tense: The tense used in a story should be consistent through out.

24. Minimal description – The word limit of 400 words per story does not leave much room for description. In our case, much of the describing is done by our animation. Rather the use of descriptive or punchy words is encouraged. E.g. tiptoed or dashed rather than just walked.

25. Well-constructed paragraphs - The paragraphs should be thought out and well-constructed. The story should be neatly divided into paragraphs as this even helps a child understand the story better. In a story of 400 words there should be 4 - 8 paragraphs at the most.

26. Complicated punctuations - As the stories are meant for children, try to avoid any complicated punctuations such as the "hyphenation".

27. Quotes - Try to avoid dividing quotes with a "he/she said" in the middle as it makes it difficult for the narrators to modulate their voices accordingly. Instead, keep it either in the beginning or at the end of the sentence.